Essential Abilities and Attributes for Admission and Continuance in the School of Social Work

The following standards, distinguished from academic standards, describe the physical, cognitive, emotional, and character requirements to provide reasonable assurance that a student can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and practice. Acquisition of competence as a social worker is a lengthy and complex process that will be undermined by significant limitations of the student's ability to participate in the full spectrum of the experiences and the requirements of the curriculum.

Students in the School of Social Work are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their years in the program. They are expected to meet these standards in the classroom and in their field education practice. Attention to these standards will be evaluated during the admission process as well as students’ classroom and field education performance.

**Attendance**

The social work student must be able to attend classes and field education placements.

**Participation**

The social work student must have the ability to participate in classes and in field education placements. Students must be able to acquire, integrate, and effectively communicate data to students, faculty, supervisors, and clients.

**Communication Skills**

The social work student must communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals. Students must express their ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen to others. They must have sufficient comprehension of spoken and written English to understand the content presented in the program.

**Self-Awareness**

The social work student must know how his or her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences affect his or her thinking, behavior, and relationships. The student must be willing to examine and change his or her behavior when it interferes with his or her working with clients and other professionals and must be able to work effectively with others in subordinate positions, as well as with those in authority.
**Professional Commitment**

The social work student must have a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession. The student must be committed to the essential values of social work, which are the dignity and worth of every individual and his or her right to a just share of society's resources.

**Knowledge Base for Social Work Practice**

The professional activities of social work students must be grounded in relevant social, behavioral, and biological science knowledge and research. This includes knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, interventions, and evaluation of practice.

**Objectivity**

The social work student must be sufficiently objective to systematically evaluate clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way.

**Empathy**

The social work student must endeavor to seek to comprehend another individual's way of life and values. He or she must be able to communicate this empathy and support to the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.

**Energy**

The social work student must: be resistant to the undesirable effects of stress; exercise appropriate self-care; develop cooperative and facilitative relationships with colleagues and peers.

**Acceptance of Diversity**

The social work student must appreciate the value of human diversity. He or she must serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation (or lack thereof), gender, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and value system.

**Interpersonal Skills**

The social work student must demonstrate the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals. These include compassion, altruism, integrity, and the demonstration of respect for and consideration of others.
**Professional Behavior**

The social work student must behave professionally. The social work student must demonstrate practice social work skills competently, ethically, and legally, in the service of clients, consumers, and communities.